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Health, Inc.

IBHP INTEGRATED BEHAVIORAL HEALTH PLAN

Connections

BPA Health, Inc. • Integrated Behavioral Health Plan • Summer 2003

50/50:

How to Build an Enduring & Strength-Based Relationship



While the image or stereotype of a successful relationship motivates most people to couple and marry, too often, the actual relationship or marriage suffers and can eventually result in a break-up or divorce. People in strained relationships can be heard saying things like:

- "He was so romantic when we first met."
- "She used to like spending time with me."
- "I used to enjoy cooking together but lately it's been left up to me. I'm fed up with carrying most of the load."

Talking negatively about relationships in past or present terms is a very strong indication that conditions have changed so much that one or the other partner is reaching their "limit."

Arguing, fighting, breaking up or divorce often ensue beyond this "limit" - unless people take preventive measures. One of the most effective things couples can do is share in "strength-based" ways. Couples who learn to select primary or lead roles in some activities, while sharing equally in others, report greater satisfaction and longevity in their relationships. Couples whose roles become "lop-sided" burn people out.

1. Start with Your Best Foot Forward - for better and for worse

Relationships work best when they're designed like a true partnership. Partners share roles and responsibilities. Determining who's best for which role is a little like interviewing for a job. If you're just starting a serious relationship or find yourself contrasting the drudgery of your present relationship with the glory of its past, then consider sitting with your partner to pick from the list of roles and responsibilities on the following page. Each of you can select some of the same items, however, try to pick at least 5 each - enough to operate the average household and family.

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My Strength Based Roles

Select at least 5 of the roles and responsibilities below and compare them with the choices of your spouse or partner in relationship.

- ☐ **1.** Bread-Winner
- ☐ **2.** Mechanic/Carpenter
- ☐ **3.** Nurse
- ☐ **4.** Gardener
- ☐ **5.** Bill-Paying Finance Wizard (usually prepares taxes as well)
- ☐ **6.** Entertainer/Social Butterfly
- ☐ **7.** Extended-Family Link
- ☐ **8.** Teacher (when children are involved)
- ☐ **9.** Camper/Fisher/Hunter
- ☐ **10.** Extreme Sports Fanatic
- ☐ **11.** School Contact (where children are involved)
- ☐ **12.** Driver
- ☐ **13.** Dishwasher
- ☐ **14.** Landscape Artist (glorified mower!)
- ☐ **15.** Artist (paint, sculpt, knit)
- ☐ **16.** Athlete (fitness guru included)
- ☐ **17.** After-School/Weekend Kid Cab (soccer anyone?)
- ☐ **18.** Shopper (from groceries to QVC)
- ☐ **19.** Investor
- ☐ **20.** Collector
- ☐ **21.** Emotional Rock
- ☐ **22.** Emotional Fountain
- ☐ **23.** Disciplinarian (for kids, of course)
- ☐ **24.** Pet Care-Taker
- ☐ **25.** Cook
- ☐ **26.** BBQ Chef
- ☐ **27.** Housekeeper
- ☐ **28.** Laundry Expert
- ☐ **29.** Story-Teller
- ☐ **30.** VCR, TV and Remote-Controller
- ☐ **31.** Negotiator and Referee (when buying a car or settling an argument)
- ☐ **32.** Garbage Collector & Escort (to the curb)

2. Make Strength-Based Choices

Pick according to your strengths. That means, pick those roles that satisfy some of the following criteria:

- You enjoy the activity and would say “when I do it well, it defines me.”
- You have been complimented for your talent in that category.
- You find the activity soothing, relaxing or otherwise peaceful.
- You would describe the activity as “essential.” You **MUST** do it for yourself.
- You find joy, delight, great interest and a sense of wonder in the activity.
- It’s just plain fun for you.
- You enjoy “solving the riddle or puzzle.”
- In a moral and ethical way of speaking, “it’s the right thing to do and I am capable of doing it.”

3. Sharing “Left-Overs”

Notice how many you picked because the activity simply **MUST** be done (in the most practical sense, the dishes must be washed). Also, notice how many activities **MUST** be done but were not selected by either of you. Move the activities or responsibilities that were selected, not by strength-based choice, but by a sense of duty (thinking “nobody else will...”) together with the **MUST**-do’s to a separate piece of paper. This list represents the negotiable “chores” that you might now consider rotating responsibility for.

4. Make a Commitment - Again

You should each have a list of strength-based responsibilities and a list of chores you’d be willing to take on completely or share equitably. Take a few minutes to talk about how you feel and whether or not the roles have changed in going through this exercise. Are you committing to anything new? If you’re satisfied and comfortable, make your commitment and move on.

5. Ask for help

If, on the other hand, you find that you are not happy with your share of responsibility and cannot peacefully negotiate your positions, ask an EAP counselor for help. Sitting with an objective and neutral professional for even one session, can help in the compromise of those things that make relationships last.

EAP

EMPLOYEE ASSISTANCE PROGRAM

■ From Myth ■ to Reality

Your EAP (Employee Assistance Program) is designed to help you address the personal concerns that interfere with desired quality of life at home and at work. The EAP, unlike traditional mental health and substance abuse benefits, attempts to include all people who are preoccupied or distressed by virtually any problem. The result for those who use their EAP wisely can be a swift return to previous levels of happiness, performance and productivity. The result for others who use their EAP can be the discovery of a brand new quality of life at home as well as at work.

Achieving results of this kind requires some discussion of the myths surrounding EAP. Once the misperceptions are cleared up, people can feel comfortable and confident in making the most of a valuable and generous employee service made possible by caring employers.

Myth: Not many people have the kind of problems the EAP is designed to address.

The truth is, none of us is immune to grief, stress, marital issues, problematic behaviors, interpersonal difficulties or poor performance in important life skill areas. In other words, we're all human and no one is perfect. Using the EAP doesn't require having a problem - it depends upon having a goal and wanting some assistance in order to achieve it.

Myth: EAP counselors only help people with serious mental health disorders.

The truth is, counselors and EAP professionals are experts in defining the scope of problem areas or goals and designing a solution-focused plan that has the very best interest of their client in mind. The concern does not have to be a serious disorder. Most people who utilize their EAP visit with a counselor to discuss:

- Relationships
- Family and children's issues
- Stress, including job-related stress
- Behaviors such as anger management or adjustment to change
- Changing habits and lifestyles, particularly in the areas of alcohol and drug use

Myth: People just need to "buck-up" and get over it, move on, and be strong.

The truth is, whether someone is dealing with profound loss, depression, alcoholism, domestic violence, or post-traumatic stress, human dilemmas are complex, involve other people and can lead to more serious legal, financial, medical and work-related consequences if not dealt with professionally. The social, genetic, biological and chemical roots to many issues require the attention of a caring expert.

Myth: Someone at work will know if you use the EAP.

No one will know. BPA produces reports that allow employers to know whether or not and how much the service is being utilized. No names or other identifying data are divulged. BPA, your counselor, and the law protect your privacy and confidentiality. You must sign a Release of Protected Health Information before any information can be shared.

Myth: If the EAP is free, there must be a catch.

The EAP is free to you when you use it. The EAP is sponsored by employers and health plans that care to provide an opportunity for professional assistance. The return on investment for the workplace is greater morale, teamwork, attendance and safety. The only thing people might decide they

want to pay for is the service or resource they are referred to beyond the EAP. It may be a book, a class, the help of an attorney or another health care professional. Most health plans have benefits that cover additional care but also have plan rules that must be followed.

Myth: People should keep personal issues “in the family” where they can be kept secret and safe.

The truth is, unless that strategy delivers proven results (which it rarely does), seeking and accepting the guidance of a neutral third party with many years of training and experience is a much more productive approach to problem solving. It’s also strictly confidential.

Myth: Whatever the problem is, it will sort itself out over time.

Probably not. Emotional, mental, behavioral and performance related problems are a lot like tooth decay or high blood pressure. If something doesn’t change (not to be confused with doing the same thing harder or more often), conditions can grow worse.

Remember: You have nothing to lose by making use of your EAP when the time comes. You have much to gain in quality of life at home, at work, with friends and loved ones, and within yourself. Put your best foot forward - call the toll-free Hotline to schedule some time for yourself.

IBHP

*Contact
information*

IBHP providers are available wherever you are located. Call the BPA Hotline to schedule an appointment with an IBHP provider near you:

IBHP HOTLINE
TOLL FREE/24 HOUR
1-877-427-2327

Residents of the Treasure Valley call
343-4180

Visit the BPA website at:
www.bpahealth.com



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